

# Catch Basins: Where Does Our Water Go?

## What is a Catch Basin?

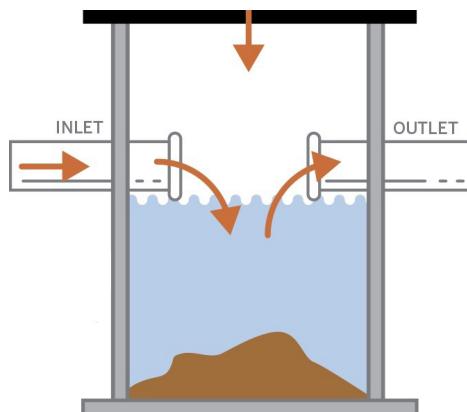
A catch basin is a drainage structure that collects stormwater runoff from surrounding surfaces and connects to the underground stormwater conveyance system. Catch basins are constructed with a sump to collect sediment and debris and are a type of stormwater inlet (storm drain inlet). Other types of stormwater inlets (storm drain inlets) do not have a sump.

Wastewater and stormwater are separated in Tacoma. Wastewater from inside homes and business are piped into wastewater treatment plants where pollutants are removed before discharge into Commencement Bay. Stormwater from catch basins flows directly into local waterways typically without being treated. That is why we must keep pollutants out of stormwater.

## What Do Catch Basins Look Like?



Catch basin as seen from street



Catch basin with treatment



Catch basin with curb inlet



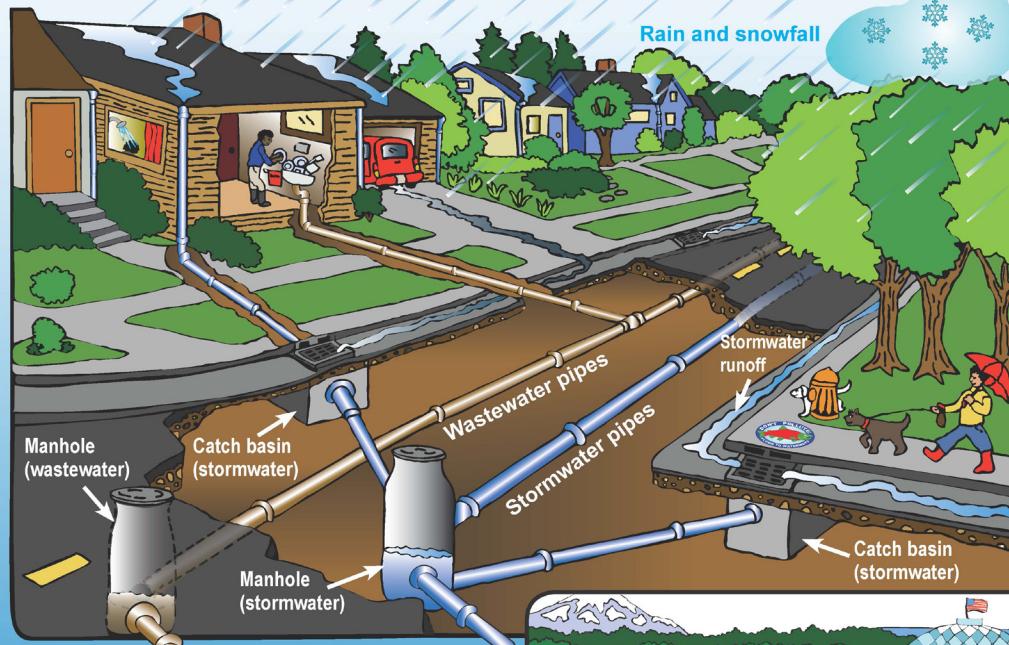
## Cleaning

Catch basins are often located on public roadways or in parking lots. While catch basins in streets and public areas are maintained by the City of Tacoma, catch basins on private property need to be maintained by the property owner.

The City routinely cleans its over 19,000 catch basins. Residents can also play a role in reducing flooding. Always use a rake or other tool for removing leaves and debris in your neighborhoods ensuring to keep material out of the storm drain system and away from catch basins during fall and winter months. Never remove debris with your hands.

# Where does the water go?

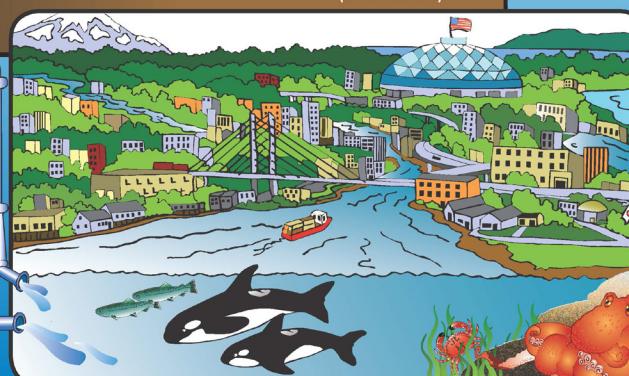
Wastewater and stormwater are separated in Tacoma



## Points to remember:

**Stormwater:** After rain falls, it runs off surfaces as stormwater and picks up pollutants as it flows along. The majority of stormwater is piped directly to streams, lakes, and Puget Sound without treatment. We all need to keep pollutants out of stormwater.

**Wastewater:** The water from your toilets, sinks, showers, and other inside drains, is piped to a wastewater treatment plant where it is cleaned before discharging into Puget Sound.



[www.cityoftacoma.org/surfacewater](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/surfacewater)



Illustration: www.noeldesignintero.com

## Help Keep Local Waterways Healthy

Actions taken each day in and around homes have a profound impact on surface water quality and habitat that fish and other aquatic animals use. Here are some environmental best management practices that can help the health of local waterways, Puget Sound, and the animals and people that live here.

1. Take your car to a commercial car wash.
2. Practice natural yard care by avoiding the use of pesticides and herbicides.
3. Dispose of grass clippings or other vegetation by composting or placing them in a yard waste bin.
4. Recycle all oils, antifreeze, solvents and batteries at the Household Hazardous Waste Facility at the Tacoma Landfill.
5. Place oil and other hazardous materials in appropriate containers and storage areas.
6. Minimize potable water use by planting drought tolerant native vegetation. Consider the use of a rain barrel for landscape watering.
7. Pick up and properly dispose of pet waste.